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ABSTRACT

Under a mandate by the board of trustees, ad hoc committees at each of the nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District plus a district-wide committee were established to find methods to maximize the utilization of existing resources for counseling and guidance services. The colleges' recommendations highlighted the following concerns: in-service training to deal with new community college clientele; improving information to students on available services; expanding use of paraprofessionals; and the need for follow-up on dropouts. A district planning team composed of counselors and administrators outlined the needs and objectives for implementing a program to serve the 150 counselors in the colleges. A three-phase staff development program, lasting from spring 1977 to December 1977 and using $39,500 of a $600,000 allocation by the trustees, was composed of the following: (1) four three-hour workshops held at each campus which focused on participant-selected topics; (2) a district-wide conference entitled "Self-Renewal for Counselors"; and (3) a ten-workshop program based on a "Mini-U" format. To be successful, any staff development program needs the support of the trustees, administration, and the participants. A literature review underscores the increased necessity for staff development caused by enrollment patterns and the reduction of new staff. (MB)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES IN THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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A PAPER PRESENTED TO
THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE IN SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 17, 1978

BY BERNARD ANCHETA

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THE SETTING: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The nine Los Angeles community colleges make up the largest community college district in the world. Its origins go back to the community college movement, which had its beginning in the California State Legislature in 1907. The Caminetti Bill permitted high schools to offer post-secondary courses. In 1917, the Ballard Act included provisions for state aid and established the early regulations for junior colleges. Finally, in 1929, the Deering Act assured financial support for junior colleges in California. It was in this year that Los Angeles City College held its first classes, and 35 junior colleges of one kind or another were operating in the State of California. During the 1920's and 30's, enrollment in these junior colleges doubled, and the importance of local colleges increased nationwide. The post World War II years were also periods of dramatic growth in terms of enrollment and physical expansion. In 1959, the legislature mandated the development of a master plan and a study of the California junior colleges. The movement of two-year colleges away from the secondary system and into higher education took place at this time. In 1967, the state authorized the establishment of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the official designation of the institutions from "junior" to "community" took place. The phenomenal growth continued until the early 1970's. In 1973, there were approximately 850,000 students in California community colleges. This mark is now exceeded by well over 1,300,000 students.

In 1969, the Los Angeles Community College District broke away from the Los Angeles Unified School District and established its separate administrative organization under the governance of a newly elected Board of Trustees. The move for independence from the Los Angeles Unified School District and its Board of Education began in 1967 with legislation sponsored by State Senator George Danielson in SB 128. It provided for a separate community college Board of Trustees and administration. The Los Angeles Board of Education followed the mandate of this legislation by passing a resolution directing the separation and formation of task force made up of faculty, administration, and classified personnel to work out the details of the new organization. Finally, on May 27, 1969, seven community college Trustees were elected and assumed the powers and duties prescribed by the California Education Code. As the elected governing body of the District, the Board of Trustees provides orderly growth, sets all the policies for educational programs, determines the educational calendar and academic standards, supervises the budget, employs personnel, and performs many other responsibilities as dictated by the California Education Code.[1]

The Education Code became permissive rather than restrictive with the passage of AB 27 in 1974:

> Authorizes, until January 1, 1976, the governing board of any school district, including community college districts, to initiate and carry on any educational program, as defined, which is not in conflict with law or purposes for which school districts are established. Authorizes, on and after January 1, 1976, the governing board of any school district, including community college districts, to initiate and carry on any program, activity, or otherwise act in any manner which is not in conflict with the purposes for which school districts are established.[2]

Currently, the Los Angeles Community College District has well over 129,000 students and over 10,000 certificated and classified employees. It includes a service area of well over 880 square miles and assessed valuation of over $16 billion. The growth over the past 49 years from 54 faculty members and 1,350 students has certainly been dramatic. The mission of the Los Angeles Community College District is best stated in the following terms by Chancellor Koltai:

> A community college is designed to facilitate that life-long process we call education. We train, we counsel, we provide for discussion, we test, we aid in the development of the arts and sciences. But, in each case, our prime responsibility is to satisfy a specific human need... the individual need to reach the highest possible level of personal achievement.[3]

INTRODUCTION

On March 31, 1976, the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District adopted the following motion which was introduced by Trustee Gwen Moore two weeks earlier:

> In order to maximize the utilization of existing resources in the District in the area of counseling and guidance and in the area of developmental services:
>
> The Chancellor is instructed to establish at each college an ad hoc committee to review and make recommendations concerning the counseling function as it is performed by the professional counseling staff, faculty counselors, peer counselors, career guidance centers, veterans counselors, faculty, and others. The committee will also review and make recommendations concerning the developmental services function of the colleges as it is performed through tutoring, learning resource centers, special developmental classes, and other supportive services.
>
> The Chancellor is also concurrently instructed to establish a Districtwide ad hoc committee consisting of the chairperson of each college committee and chaired by the Vice Chancellor, Educational Planning and Development or his designated representative, as approved by the Chancellor.
>
> Each committee will submit its recommendations to the Districtwide committee which will prepare a final report for the Chancellor. The committees will deal with the following questions:
>
> 1) Are there recommendations which might be made immediately which would improve the programs and utilization of existing resources in the various student services at the colleges relating to the counseling of students and the supportive services provided to them?

2) What information and procedures are available to determine the effectiveness of each of the programs? Are these adequate to provide information on which management decisions can be effectively based?

   a) If so, how effective is each service found to be? What suggestions might be made for improvement?

   b) If not, what information or procedures are recommended to improve the information base?

3) How to maximize the utilization through coordination of existing resources in the District, e.g., tutorial services, peer counseling, faculty counseling, and professional counseling?[4]

This motion instructed the Chancellor to establish an ad hoc committee at each of the nine colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District. The committee's function included the reviewing of counseling and developmental programs at the college level and to make recommendations for the more effective utilization of resources in this area. Additionally, the committee was designated to identify and analyze procedures for program evaluation. The identification and description of current activities and recommendations for coordination of this program were also committee responsibilities. Essentially, it was the responsibility of the District Office administrative staff to interpret any vague questions in the Board of Trustees' motion.

At the direction of the Chancellor, a Districtwide ad hoc committee was formed with representatives from all nine campuses and District Office administration. The campus representatives chaired a college committee composed of representatives from student services and developmental program and related areas. These areas included, but were not limited to, the following: counseling, career education, veterans programs, handicap programs, financial aid, disadvantaged supportive programs, learning skills programs, job placement, child development centers, and women's programs, etc. The college committees were instructed to review services and programs and to respond to the Board of Trustees' motion. The Districtwide committee met twice, on April 26 and June 22, 1976, to discuss the guidelines for surveying counseling and developmental programs. In addition, a common information form was developed, and campuses could use this form to report services at their respective colleges. The college committees met at various times during the Spring 1976 semester and divided the responsibility among the various program areas. Finally, all of the material was gathered by the campus chairmen and formulated in a report prepared for the District Office administration. The synthesized material prepared by the campus chairman formed a basis for reporting information to the Board of Trustees. During this period, this writer served as the committee chairman on this District ad hoc committee, representing West Los Angeles College.

The nine college counseling and developmental services reports were completed in June, 1976, using a standard reporting format and ranging in length from eleven to over 200 pages. Some common themes emerged from these reports:

1. In-service training for staff in dealing with new community college student clientele.

2. Expanded services to students in the areas of group counseling, peer and paraprofessional counseling, and personal development classes.

3. Improved physical facilities to maintain counselor-student privacy.

4. Research studies in the areas of student needs, student attrition, and effectiveness of the delivery of student services.

5. Expanded advising services to students by using faculty advisors.

6. Improve the communication of student personnel services to students.[5]

In the midst of budget deliberations during the summer of 1976, the Board of Trustees voted to set aside $600,000 from its undistributed reserves (now appropriation for contingencies) for improving counseling by funding the following recommendations received in an informative report:

Colleges highlighted current concerns, which include:

a) in-service training to deal with new community college clientele;

b) improving information to students on available services;

c) expanding use of paraprofessionals;

d) need for follow-up on dropouts.

During the Fall 1976 semester, an ad hoc counseling improvement program committee was convened by the Director of Resource Development and Student Services. Each college in the District named one representative to serve on this committee. A guideline and format for writing proposals was developed, and colleges were encouraged to write proposals based on the four concerns. It was recommended that the proposal for funding be brief and include an abstract, objectives, plan, futures, and budget sections. The District Committee would also serve as the proposal screening committee. It met weekly, discussing concepts and issues, presenting various proposals and receiving proposals, and, finally, reducing the numerous proposals from all nine campuses. The dynamics and interactions were unique and naturally politically motivated. Each representative attempted to present their college's point of view in attempting to obtain as much funds as possible for their campus. The initial discussion focused on how to effectively allocate the $600,000 to the nine district community colleges. Various proposals were offered. First purported was an equal distribution of the funds to all nine colleges. In essence, some committee members suggested that we divide the $600,000 by nine and distribute the funds equally. Another suggested that we divide the

funds according to the number of students on the campus, with a given amount per student. Larger campuses would get more money than smaller campus because of their enrollment. Eventually, the committee grouped into the large and small college factions, the larger colleges attempting to unite and "sell" their large college concept, and a smaller college claiming this was unfair and inconsiderate. The committee, after just one or two meetings, decided that each college would submit proposals and the merits of each proposal would be discussed and funds allocated. Since the proposals would have budgets, it was the committee's ultimate responsibility to decide the level of funding for each proposal. Several political tactical maneuvers which Blocker, Bender, and Martorana discuss were utilized by the committee. The trial balloon tactical maneuver was used where proposals would be suggested and other colleges would join in and give their support, thereby creating a multi-college project.[6] The concept of staff development was developed in this way. One of the colleges wrote a staff development proposal. The group lauded the merits of the proposal and suggested that other campuses be permitted to "buy into the proposal." Thus, in a sense, a compromise or concession resulted. The more verbal and assertive emerged as leaders in the group. They argued, cajoled, and debated the assets of their proposals. However, a fair and reasonably just allocation of funds resulted. Interestingly enough, the committee could not ultimately make the final decision. Instead of the committee battling and struggling, an honest attempt to iron out compromises was the outcome. They suggested that another select final screening committee composed of representatives selected by the Director of Resource Development and Student Services make the final decision regarding which proposals would be funded. This select group accomplished its task at the beginning of January of 1977.

The Board of Trustees on February 9, 1977, eleven months after its initial motion, approved $425,266 to implement the counseling improvement in the District. The remaining balance of $174,734 was reserved for additional funding of counseling improvement programs at a later date.

In April, 1977, this writer was among several applicants for the position of Coordinator of Counseling Improvement Programs. I was selected to coordinate the counseling improvement program at the District Office. I left my position as counselor at West Los Angeles College to go to the District Office as a coordinator on a temporary assignment until October, 1977.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In reviewing the literature, I found a paucity of studies and research which dealt specifically with the politics of staff development for student personnel services. Most of the published literature focused on needs and recommendations for staff development and in-service training activities. A preponderance of community college staff development literature deals with faculty, management, and organizational development.

O'Bannion points to the change in terminology from in-service training to staff development. The single greatest resource of the community college is its staff, and the quality of collegiate education is dependent on staff

competency. Interestingly, enrollment decline, fiscal restraints, and the lack of new personnel in community colleges creates a need for more rather than less staff development to maintain standards of excellence.[7]

Hammons, Wallace, and Watts enumerates why community college staffs need developing:

1. Due to a lack of preprofessional and preservice programs, or the inadequacies of existing programs, most staff members were not initially prepared to work in the community college.

2. Few community colleges have developed valid in-service or preservice programs. Thus, little has been done to correct the initial lack of staff preparation.

3. There is a need for increased effectiveness and efficiency due to competition for limited tax dollars and growing public demands for accountability.

4. A decline in the birth rate and the trend to decreasing enrollments have led to a "steady-state" environment characterized by low staff turnover and the recognition that needed changes will come about through the efforts of present staff rather than through employment of new persons.

5. A growing recognition on the part of most staff that they have training needs, and an expressed willingness and desire to participate in viable staff development programs on the part of most.

6. The future success of the community college depends upon the ability of its staff to adapt to a constantly changing environment.[8]

Miller, in a survey of 560 members of the American College Personnel Association, found that many inequities exist and many staff members expressed with disenchantment collegiate institutions in-service programs. There is a need for specialized in-service staff development program packages that can be purchased or rented by institutions. With financial restrictions and growing accountability in the area of student personnel services, a more professional staff is needed. In-service training and staff development programs must become an integral part of a competent student personnel worker's daily activities; otherwise, future efforts in professional development will be in jeopardy. Miller concludes his report with the following plea for change and action:

> Likewise, a source of program for making available inexpensive resource consultants to participate in on-campus in-service programs appears to be needed, as does new and updated staff development programming. There is an apparent lack of emphasis on continuing education, in-service education, or staff development programming in our academic

> preparation programs that may account for some of the shortcomings that have been evidenced. Perhaps if the directors of such programs saw fit to focus more attention on the importance of continued learning after employment, in-service education would become a more natural and integral part of the institutions in which their graduates find employment.[9]

The literature supports the concept that the community college is what it is today because of its adaptability and quality of staff. The significance of staff development will increase because of the changes in our society and the challenges confronting post-secondary education in this country.

Hammons and Wallace succinctly summarizes the literature on staff development for student personnel services:

> The two-year college is presently facing perhaps its greatest challenges in its 75-year history. To continue to grow and prosper, it must quickly and effectively adapt to the radical changes in its external environment, in its student clientele, in its instructional approach; in short, it must adapt to change itself.
>
> Yet, the capacity of the community college to adapt to change depends primarily on the ability of the staff to change and on the ability of the various administrators in the college to lead and to facilitate change. In this respect, the student personnel services position is pivotal because of its effect and influence upon the student population.[10]

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES

A District planning team of five, which included counselors and administrators, decided to establish a three-phase staff development program for counselors in the Los Angeles Community College District. The major concern of this committee was to design a program that would appeal to the staff development needs of approximately 150 counselors at the nine campuses.

Counselors have close contact with students as total individuals; will offer advice and counsel regarding an individual's current and future goals; and have significant impact on the direction in making students aware of personal career educational objectives. These important responsibilities mandated the need for effective professional staff development program. This need was an affirmation of counselors' express desires. An assessment of the specific staff development needs was conducted by the District staff and a consultant which included visits to each of the colleges in the District. These visits occurred prior to the staff development sessions and both verbal and written assessments of possible topics were drawn from the college counseling staff members. It was after the visit to the colleges that the planning team decided on the three-phase staff development program. It was imperative that college staff members feel involved in the planning and designing of the

workshops. Actually, some of the visits to the colleges confirmed the issue that many counselors initially express concern that staff development was "being forced upon us by the District Office."

Several specific needs were listed by the District Office planning team after campus consultation:

1. Opportunities for instructor-advisors in counseling positions to upgrade or obtain new counseling skills.

2. Current methods and new techniques of counseling could be learned.

3. Ways to develop techniques in the delivery of counseling services to large groups of students, e.g. personal development classes.

4. Opportunities for increasing sensitivity to and dealing effectively with minorities, older students, and non-traditional students populations.

With these specific needs in mind, the planning committee indicated objectives for the staff development programs. Numerous objectives and goals were discussed. Some were discarded and others revised and synthesized. Ultimately, the following were selected as the objectives for the staff development program.

1. To increase student knowledge about counseling services and all areas of student personnel services.

2. To increase opportunities for counseling staff members to upgrade their knowledge, skills, and techniques through workshops and seminars.

3. To provide a systematic means to enable all District counseling personnel to participate in a professional staff development program.

4. To provide a system for the development of an effective professional development program within the District.

The first phase was planned whereby the staff of each campus could design or choose a topic for staff development. It was organized with a format of four 3-hour workshops with a specific topic selected by the college. These workshops took place during the working day, and the topics were selected and implemented at the nine campuses. Workshop leaders were selected from a highly qualified list of experts. Two or three possible leaders were designated for each topic, and discussions between the District committee and individual college counseling staff led to the selection of these leaders. The workshop leaders were requested to submit a list of objectives, materials to be presented, and complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the workshops. The workshop leaders came from neighboring

community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and those in private practice. The workshops were held at the local college campus, and each college had a counselor who acted as a liaison between the campus and the District Office.

The second phase of the staff development program was a Spring Conference held on May 23, 1977 at Los Angeles Pierce College. A conference was entitled "Self-Renewal for Counselors." It consisted of a one-day drive-in conference and included three speakers, workshops, a barbecue luncheon, and an afternoon of additional activities. An extensive evaluation instrument was constructed to assess the conference and to obtain topics for the third phase of the staff development program. One-hundred and forty-five counselors and student personnel services professionals participated in this conference.

The third and final thrust of the staff development program consisted of a ten-workshop program during the Fall of 1977. Utilizing a "Mini-U" format which Beeler describes:

> Basically, the "Mini-U" consists of a combination of the Free University Model of the mid-1960's, and a mini-course designed to achieve specific instructional objectives with a small group of learners in a brief period of time.[11]

Counselors, student services paraprofessionals and administrators, college nurses, child development center directors, and program coordinators were invited to select a workshop of their choice. All were permitted release time from their jobs. The workshops were conducted from 1 - 4 p.m., held on four different days, and totaled twelve hours in duration.

Every participant was able to evaluate the effectiveness and merits of their workshop. In addition, interviews were held with selected counselors and workshop leaders regarding the workshops.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION

The participants' evaluations indicated that the planning process was effective in that they were involved. However, many initially felt that the District Office was going to "force staff development down their throats."

All of the staff development objectives were realized in the evaluation except objective number three which related to skill development. The reasons for failing to meet this objective relate to the fact that the workshops were held for twelve hours, and the presentation style of the leaders and lack of adequate time hindered the accomplishment of this objective. Some participants claim their involvement and participation was minimal and, therefore, did not lead to skill development.

Many participants related that they would have preferred more experiential based workshops with more group discussion and activity centered topics. They recommended that more time be permitted so that the sessions could become more interactive. With one exception, all the leaders of the workshops seemed to be respected for their personal approach and their professional attitude in contributing to the staff development program.

Space and facilities were generally good. However, in two specific instances, classroom selection was inadequate. For example, one interactive workshop was allocated a chemistry lab because of lack of space on the campus. Essentially, participants responded positively to the workshop format, probably because they were given release time to attend the sessions. Several felt that their travel time, especially in Phase III, was especially lengthy, some traveling as many as twenty-five miles one way to a college location. Although a consultant was hired to evaluate the program, cost effectiveness was an important factor in deciding not to attempt an exhaustive, extensive, and highly sophisticated evaluation.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

Many counselors voiced the opinion that they would like to participate in workshops on other topics. Some interest was also expressed by counselors outside the District regarding workshop format and topics. A possibility would be to publicize this model of staff development at professional meetings throughout the country, as well as writing up the program for professional journals. I presented a workshop at the California Personnel and Guidance Association entitled "Staff Development for Counselors" in February, 1978. It was recommended that several of the workshop topics be selected for videotape production to be presented within the District and also available on a lease basis to other community college districts. It is further possible that some of these videotape topics could become the subject of instructional television (I.T.V.) courses.

It also became apparent that with the distribution of voluminous materials at each workshop, District counselors could benefit from a resource library. Classification of documents and their availability to District personnel for future staff development programs is important.

The program also demonstrated that many District personnel had expertise which equalled that of the leaders who conducted the workshops. It was suggested that a survey of these experts be made and a District resident expert program begun. These in-house experts would prepare and conduct staff development workshops within the affective curriculum.

The overall acceptance of the staff development models indicated that the models and topical workshops could be generalized to other District personnel. Most fruitful would be directing these workshops at community service, women's centers, classified and paraprofessional personnel, as well as instructional staff.

The program realized three of four objectives. The skill development objective was not met, however. It is recommended that a semester-long workshop focused on skill development and conducted as a practicum be initiated. This practicum experience would focus on "how to" and on the theory of topics such as group counseling or relaxation therapy.

It is further recommended that each person within student affairs on each campus be given release time to act as a staff development coordinator. This person would liaison with District staff and offer many workshops and visitations to other campuses for individual college staffs.

As staff development becomes institutionalized within the District, particular incentives must be found so that counselors will continue to upgrade their skills and knowledge. One suggestion would be to continue to offer the program certificates and give the participants a salary increment for participating in workshops.

Lastly, the literature and this experience supports the proposition that staff development programs must be more effectively evaluated. If institutionalization is to take place, sophisticated assessments must show that funds expended for staff development do make a difference in student learning and staff behavioral and attitudinal changes.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted again that the impetus for attempting to find methods to "maximize the utilization of existing resources" for counseling and guidance services was spawned by the Board of Trustees. Subsequently, the Chancellor of the District was directed to implement the desires of the Trustees. A comprehensive study of counseling and developmental services was conducted and a summary report presented to the Board of Trustees.

It must be stressed that the Trustees supported the recommendation of the summary report by their actions, that is, their voting to set aside $600,000 to improve counseling in the District.

Staff development for student personnel services from its initiation in the Spring, 1977, to its conclusion in December, 1977, was allocated $39,472. The continuity of the staff development program for student personnel services into the 1978-1979 fiscal year by necessity fell along the wayside with the passage of Proposition 13. The Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees placed highest priority in retaining all regular classified and certificated employees. Thus, discretionary programs such as staff development became the victim of the budget reduction measures induced by restricted local property tax income to the District.

It must be reiterated that the literature supports the premise that the enrollment plateaus and reduction of new staff increases the necessity for staff development. The changes in student clientele in community colleges and because of tenure laws in California, the retraining of faculty in low-enrollment courses and programs may dictate extensive staff development on the part of public education.

Politically, any staff development program needs the support of the Board of Trustees, administration, and the participants if it is to be successful. It cannot be mandated or forced upon the staff without negative consequences.

A second postulate is that a definite need must exist. Here again, the need must be perceived or determined by the trustees, administration, and the staff. The staff development program described in this paper is a case in point. Campus personnel and administrative staff recommended staff development to deal with "new community college clientele," the Board of Trustees provide fiscal support.

Thirdly, participant involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluation is axiomatic. The participating staff members are especially interested in this aspect because it affects their professional and personal growth.

Fourthly, a public relations or promotional campaign, however modest, must be conducted. Communication to the staff and their supervisors should "come from the top."

The program must be adaptable and broad enough to meet the needs of a large and differing staff. Participation should be voluntary with no punitive actions for someone choosing not to attend workshops.

Lastly, a system to recognize staff participation should be devised. Fiscal remuneration may be perceived as "bribery" to attend the workshops. The staff development program described did award "Certificates of Completion" to participants. These certificates were given to the Dean of Student Services for presentation to his staff at an appropriate occasion.

Staff development programs, when placed alongside instructional programs and mandated supportive services for students, have traditionally had lower priority in community college budgets. Thus, the political revolt of voters to rising property taxes will adversely affect future staff development programs. The truly professional staff member of community colleges will continue to seek and attend workshops, conferences, seminars, and other continuing education activities. These personal staff development activities will be funded by participants or professional educational associations rather than colleges or districts.

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